

## **The Pregnant and Postpartum Women Treatment Reauthorization Act**

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Drug overdose deaths, particularly deaths involving synthetic opioids like fentanyl, reached record highs in 2020 and 2021.<sup>1</sup> This trend is particularly concerning for pregnant women, who are experiencing more overdoses than before. From 2017 to 2020, drug overdose deaths among pregnant and new mothers went up by about 81%.<sup>2</sup> Many of these deaths involved synthetic opioids and the use of multiple drugs at once, highlighting the roles of fentanyl and polysubstance use in shaping current overdose risk patterns.

Pregnant women are at a higher risk because pregnancy and the postpartum period bring many physical and emotional changes. These changes can make existing drug use problems worse or lead to new ones, harming both the mother and her baby. The rising number of overdoses among pregnant women shows how severe the drug use problem is and the need for special care and support for this group.

**The Pregnant and Postpartum Women Treatment Reauthorization Act** responds to this urgent need. It reauthorizes funding for the Grant Program for Residential Treatment for Pregnant and Postpartum Women (PPW program) that helps pregnant women and new mothers get residential treatment for drug abuse, as well as prevention and recovery support. This program provides a range of services like Substance-Use Disorder treatment planning and recovery, parenting training, mental health counseling, and harm reduction interventions. It supports public and nonprofit entities that offer a range of comprehensive services, tailored to this specific group. By focusing on the unique needs of pregnant and postpartum women, the PPW program aims to foster an environment conducive to recovery, ensuring that these women and their children receive the necessary support and resources for a healthier and safer future.

The PPW program supports evidence-based parenting and treatment models including trauma-specific services in a trauma-informed context. It uses proven methods for parenting and treatment, focusing on services sensitive to trauma. These efforts aim to reduce the use of harmful substances like drugs and alcohol among pregnant and new mothers, lead to safer pregnancies and better birth outcomes, decrease the negative effects of drug use on infants and children, and improve the health and well-being of both mothers and children. The program also seeks to prevent mental and behavioral problems in children, improve parenting skills, family life, economic stability, and overall quality of life. Additionally, it aims to reduce exposure to crime, violence, and neglect, and decrease all forms of abuse within families.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7050e3.htm?s\\_cid=mm7050e3\\_w](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7050e3.htm?s_cid=mm7050e3_w)

<sup>2</sup> <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2799164?resultClick=1>